

TUCKER, RALPH

H. Biography TUCKER



RALPH TUCKER

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

T. H. Biography
Lew Taylor
STAR 3/16/71
Quits As Top Executive

By JOE BOLAND
Star Staff Writer

Former Terre Haute Mayor Ralph Tucker's withdrawal Monday from the race for the Democratic nomination for mayor gave rise to speculation he would be appointed executive vice president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce Tuesday.

In a surprise move Monday, Lew Taylor, the Chamber executive vice president, announced he had submitted his resignation to the organization's board of directors. Taylor cited "irreconcilable differences of opinion with the new administration" as the motivating reason behind his decision to resign.

Bernard Carney, who was installed as Chamber president in January, said he would meet with the Chamber staff Tuesday morning at which time it is hoped a replacement for Taylor will be named.

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Carney declined to identify any candidate for the position, saying only it would be a "local man" but reliable sources indicated Monday afternoon Tucker would receive the appointment.

Tucker has been waging a considerable advertising campaign during the last few months for the mayor's post but had not filed his candidacy with the Vigo County Clerk's office. Tucker served as mayor of Terre Haute from 1948 until 1967 when he decided not to seek a sixth consecutive term.

A native of Hypena, Tucker came to Terre Haute as a child and attended local public schools while living at the former Rose Orphan's Home. He was graduated from Wiley High School and became a newscaster and man-on-the-street in-

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Community Affairs File



LEW TAYLOR

Tucker

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interviewer for radio station WBOW.

Tucker was elected to a term as city clerk in 1938 while serving as vice president and general manager of the local office of the National Literary Association. The 63-year-old former mayor was a candidate for the Indiana governorship in 1956 against Republican Harold Hanley.

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A past president of the Indiana Municipal League, Tucker has operated a public relations agency here since he left city hall in 1967. He and his wife, Virginia, live at 341 Barton Ave. The couple has two married daughters.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Tucker Monday evening declined to comment on the possible appointment.

Taylor, who succeeded John K. Lamb as executive vice president of the Chamber in 1967, formerly served in the same capacity for the Bloomington (Ill.) Association of Commerce. Prior to his three years at Bloomington, Taylor was director of industrial development for the Chamber of Commerce at Casper, Wyo.

The veteran Chamber manager recently was accepted by the Academy of Organization Management of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The academy limits its admission to 30 members annually.

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During his four years with the local Chamber, Taylor has initiated programs which reflect a varied field of activity for its businessmen and women members. FOCUS '70, a project initiated by Taylor to seek the guidance of the community in Chamber priorities, became the blueprint for the organization's program.

An innovative program of service to existing business and continuing search for new industry was centered in the Chamber's offices under Taylor's direction. Taylor said Monday the results of this effort will be

realized in the community during the coming months.

Taylor said he has no immediate plans for future employment but indicated he hopes to continue as a chamber official in another city. He and his wife and four children live at 72 Heritage Drive.

Tucker Talks About Practical Politics

JUL 26 1973

Community Affairs File

By JACK HUGHES
Tribune Staff Writer

Money, organization and hard work are three of the essential elements of practical politics. Former Terre Haute Mayor Ralph Tucker told Taft Institute teacher-students Wednesday in an address to the political seminar.

"Nomination for Office" was the topic of the session Wednesday afternoon at Mills Hall as the Indiana State University institute director, Dr. C. W. Engelland, introduced the former five-term mayor and 1956 Indiana Democrat gubernatorial candidate.

Tucker, who is now executive director of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce, and holds himself apart from active party politics, spoke with enthusiasm and expertise as he alternately shocked and charmed his audience.

"I've never known an open primary election," he declared early in the talk, although he later said that he favors a "direct primary" over the existing convention process used in state and national politics.

His credentials for the professorial stint in the Taft Institute include his participation as a delegate to national party convention five times, in addition to other aspects of his political career.

And his observation of the convention nominating process led to his regard for direct primaries. In spite of party control exercised over primaries, he said, good candidates with money, organization and a capacity for hard work can beat

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"party favorites."

Tucker went on to say that he had proved this in three of his own mayoral elections "... when I ran without the support of the party leadership." In those cases, his own organization, funding and work by dedicated followers were the essentials of victory. "You can get all the books (and theory) ... but it won't work unless you go out and apply it," he said, adding that political success depends on "... going out and being heard and being known."

The speaker noted that he believed his own success against party opposition was an exception to the rule, which, generally stated, sees such candidates who "... may win the primary, but they don't win in November."

"I think in the main, the nominating process is pretty much organizational," he continued, saying he's "... not sure it's the right thing, but it seems to be necessary."

The necessity relates to human nature, Tucker indicated as he pointed out the need for party structure to find and support good candidates for public office.

He criticized apathy and unorganized political efforts with the comment that "Too many misfits — political abortions,

if you will—are in public office because of apathy." He said, however, that such miscarriages are lessening as a result of increasing awareness on the part of the voters. This, in turn, is traced to improved communications and education "... because, in part, of what you're doing here (at the Taft Institute)."

His 1956 gubernatorial nomination without state party leadership support, while it seemed to argue against the notion that "... the convention is the most controlled element in politics," nevertheless seemed to prove several rules. State party leadership hadn't garnered sufficient strength for the favored candidate. Nine ballots were required before Tucker was nominated. "I couldn't have done it if the party hadn't been split so many ways, if there hadn't been as many candidates as there were," he reported.

Recalling the time in response to a question that followed his prepared remarks, the speaker lifted his eyes to the ceiling, fixing his mind's eye on the 1956 Indiana Democrat Convention floor.

At the seventh ballot an unprecedented 30-minute recess was called to boos and general disturbances as "... everyone looked around, wondering what was going on."

Naming several of the state and national party leaders at the time, Tucker said, "I found out. They wanted to see me in the back room."

The gist of that meeting was, if Tucker would take himself out of the running he would receive "wholehearted support" for a later U.S. Senate race. He stayed in, won the nomination, but lost in November.

"That decision may not have been the biggest mistake I ever made—but damn near!" the speaker confessed, noting that the man who later won the Senate race still is in office.

That wasn't the end of his political career, however. He returned to Terre Haute and won re-election to mayor three more times.

And he credited those victories to the essentials already outlined, particularly the dedication of campaign workers.

The precinct and precinct workers are "all important" to a candidate who must also have considerable "intestinal fortitude. You're only going to be as successful as the people you surround yourself with," Tucker stated as he offered advice to any aspiring political candidates in the group.

"Go out into every precinct. Hire women in the precinct who will knock door to door and not just pass out literature, but talk.

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"Don't get into politics because you're mad at somebody . . . have (some positive reason) something concrete . . . a goal. Concentrate on what's right, not what's wrong."

"Be prepared to work and work hard." For nominations on the state or district level . . . be prepared to do a lot of work a long time in advance. What (the organization) is for in January, they may not be in May . . . Deals are made constantly on the state level and national politics . . ."

He continued, "If you want to be nominated and have the economics, get the support of the organization, or build your own."

And, he reminded, don't even forget the precinct and precinct workers. Asked if he continued to maintain interest in workers and other details of campaigning after election — if he con-

tinued to watch them — he said, with feeling, "Like they were my own children."

He concluded his remarks with the observation that, while he enjoys the challenge of his present position in supporting active community progress, he frankly misses the political arena.

"I think I developed, as a result of my experience, a great compassion for people . . . I don't think I'll ever seek public office again," he said, noting that he frequently is asked to by people he meets ". . . on the street, at the market."

"But," he added, "I don't know that I won't."



TAFT TALK BY TUCKER—The Taft Institute on politics at Indiana State University received insight into the practical politics of nominating procedures from a recognized expert, former Mayor Ralph Tucker, now executive vice president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce, who won five terms in the city's top office from 1948 through 1967, and captured the 1956 Democratic nomination for Indiana governor against overwhelming opposition. The institute is directed by Dr. C. W. Engelland (left), director of the ISU Social Science Education Center and professor of political science; attended by several dozen social studies teachers including Mrs. Linda Patrick; and was addressed Wednesday afternoon at Mills Hall by former Mayor Tucker.

T. H. 11. 11. 1970

House of Photography.

Community Affairs File



Tucker, Ralph (Biography)
TARGET OF ATTENTION at the summer muster of the Strawberry Hill Cannoniers this past weekend at the Charles Ray farm was Ralph Tucker (right), executive director of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce and former mayor of Terre Haute, who was named Man-of-the-Year in the organization headed by Generalissimo Lenhardt Bauer (left) who presented the award to Tucker
House of Photography Photo

Community Affairs File

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'Mayor' seemed part of Ralph Tucker's name

Biography
by Fred J. Nation

Sp NOV 1 9 1977

Ralph Tucker had been out of office almost 10 years, but there was rarely a day when more than one person didn't address him as "Mayor." After 20 years in office the name just didn't sound right without the title in front of it.

Mayor Tucker died last Saturday at the age of 71. He died of cancer with which he had been waging a personal battle for years, losing ground slowly, but not without a fight.

His death followed those this year of two of his one-time political allies, later turned adversaries: Ralph Berry and L. V. "Dutch" Letzkus. More than three decades of political wars and Democratic Party victories revolved around the three of them.

Mayor Tucker bested them all as far as holding an office. He served five terms as chief executive of the city, plus an earlier term as city clerk. He retired from public office on Dec. 31, 1967, without being defeated for those local offices. Only an unsuccessful campaign for governor in 1956 marred his record.

He never retired from politics, though. It was still an avocation with him and in both 1971 and 1975 he talked of running again. Ralph Tucker had an aversion to losing battles, though, and he didn't run either time.

As executive vice president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce, he had to keep away from active politics, but that was like trying to keep him from flashing that famous grin, or leaving his white hat at home, or keeping him from cooking in the kitchen. It couldn't be done.

Twice he came to bat for his good friend

Judge Harold Bitzegaio and helped him win close primary victories when current powers in the party structure wanted to dump the incumbent judge.

In 1976 he helped Judge Frank Crawford, his former city attorney, in a losing primary battle against old foe Berry. Undaunted, he did what he could in the fall by bringing Democrats over to Hugh D. McQuillan. He won.

It was hard for Mayor Ralph Tucker to avoid an election. He liked to fight against the odds.

He had his share as mayor of Terre Haute, taking over in the post World War II period when prosperity somewhat bypassed Terre Haute. He kept taxes down and tried his best to attract new industry and business to Terre Haute. In the later half of his term the city met with success, as Mayor Tucker cooperated with the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce under John K. Lamb and indeed did widen the city's base. It was a fight.

So was Mayor Tucker's relationship with other political units and with the news media. For years he carried on a running feud with the Indianapolis Star which regularly carried stories about vice and corruption in Terre Haute, much of it laid at the mayor's doorstep. He fought back, defending the city's good name, while also preserving some of Terre Haute's leftover frontier spirit, which has since pretty well evaporated. He and the city were taken to task in Life Magazine and the Saturday Evening Post, but Mayor Tucker survived. They didn't though.

His broad smile and warm manner won him many friends and he took on the state Democratic organization in 1956, seeking the gubernatorial nomination. In the kind of convention which has just about disappeared Mayor Tucker won the nomination on the ninth ballot, defeating the favorites: Matthew Welsh, later governor; Roger Branigin, later governor, and S. Hugh Dillin, now a federal judge. It was a bad year for Democrats, though -- the second Eisenhower election. Mayor Tucker ran 100,000 votes ahead of Adlai Stevenson, the presidential standard bearer, but lost to Harold Handley.

Always an impeccable dresser, Mayor Tucker earned the nickname, "Jimmy Walker of the Midwest," after the sartorially elegant mayor of New York. He was also an

accomplished public speaker, able to speak easily without notes, an unusual trait for a small town politician. He came from the Sullivan County community of Hymera, where he was one of nine children. His mother brought the children to Terre Haute and he lived for a time at the old Rose Orphans Home. He first became familiar to local residents in 1929 when he became WBOW Radio's "man on the street" conducting interviews with local citizens.

In 1938 he began a five year term as city clerk under Republican Mayor Vern McMillan. He also was an officer of the National Literary Association, a national magazine subscription firm which had offices in Terre Haute. He retained that position for a time after he became mayor.

Until Mayor Tucker, the mayor's job had been considered a parttime position, but he made it a fulltime job, which it has remained since. He was the most active mayor that Terre Haute had seen. With his familiar white hat he was on the scene at major fires, helping direct rescue operations and doing what he could.

He worked long and hard at the terrible Home Packing Company explosion scene in the early 1960s, staying for hours and helping dig through the rubble to rescue workers trapped by the explosion.

As mayor he was a firm believer in the patronage system and provided jobs for hundreds of out of work men and women over the years. He ran his own WPA program and it earned him many friends, as well as some critics.

He cultivated the sister city relationship with Tajimi, Japan, and visited there.

The memories of Mayor Tucker are many here:

--Driving his red, Thunderbird convertible in parades;

--Running his hands back through his hair during a speech about his "ceety" as he liked to say it;

--Smiling his way through thousands of proclamation signings and ribbon cuttings as mayor and later as Chamber of Commerce executive;

--Calling an election after seeing three or four precincts;

--Fighting off cancer, coming to the office and attending countless meetings, no doubt in great pain.

Although he had his share of political enemies, few will deny him his uniqueness in Terre Haute's history, or the valor of his last fight. He didn't lose many; he really didn't lose this one either. Anyone who held the last day off for as many years as he did while continuing to do what he thought should be done, well, it was the kind of fight Mayor Tucker relished.

Tucker, Ralph

opinions

OURS - Community Affairs File

Ralph

Biography

Tucker

SP NOV 19 1977

Few persons have ever been as closely identified with Terre Haute as Ralph Tucker. His death last Saturday after a long but courageous fight with cancer came only two weeks after the death of the city's other living legend, Anton Hulman Jr.

They made their marks in different ways, but both were synonymous with Terre Haute. Ralph Tucker chose politics and he will always be remembered as "mayor." His five terms as mayor were unprecedented and not likely to be equalled here.

He prided himself on operating the city with a conservative budget and on attracting new business and industry to the city. He did both and it helped him gain support from a number of Republicans as well as Democrats.

Ralph Tucker was a controversial mayor and he never shied away from a fight. He became mayor during the time when Terre Haute still had a reputation for being wide open. During his 20 years in City Hall, the temperament of the community changed and consequently Mayor Tucker became a target for much local, state and national criticism. No matter how intense or severe, he always defended the reputation and worth of the community with strength and conviction.

And he was a strong man. His many friends and acquaintances have watched him valiantly battling cancer in recent years. It was a fight which many would have given up years ago, but Ralph Tucker persisted until his body could do no more.

His white hat and his broad, warm smile will be remembered by many in Terre Haute and across the state. He practiced politics as a full time profession and made the mayor's job a full time one. He, along with the late Dutch Letzkus who also died last week, helped to build a strong Democratic Party organization here which only in recent years has started to crumble.

Ralph Tucker had his share of political enemies, especially when he was mayor. But he also had the respect of his foes. Since he left office and took over at the Chamber of Commerce, he made many new friends among those who before had disagreed with him politically.

Ralph Tucker and Terre Haute were synonymous for so long it will be difficult now for many to realize the mayor won't be around anymore.

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Ralph Tucker Had Long

Star 11-14-77

Political Career

Tucker,
Ralph

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See Additional Photos On Page 2

Funeral services for former longtime Terre Haute Mayor Ralph Tucker, 66, who died Saturday at Union Hospital after an extended illness, will be 2:30 p.m. Tuesday at Bedino Peace Chapel, with Rev. John Cironna officiating. Burial will be in Highland Lawn Cemetery.

Friends may call at the funeral home between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. Monday. Memorial services by Elks Lodge No. 86 will be 7:30 p.m. Monday at the funeral home.

Survivors include the widow, Virginia; two daughters, Mrs. Sheila Kaperak and Mrs. Marcia Ray; two grandsons, Todd and Terry Ray; a sister, Mrs. Margaret Gageby, and several nieces and nephews.

Tucker made his home at 341 Barton Ave. He suffered a severe illness several years before his fatal attack Saturday. He was admitted to Union Hospital at 10 a.m. and died at 7:55 p.m.

Tucker was Terre Haute's 32nd mayor, taking office in 1947. He

became the first mayor to succeed himself since 1838 and was the only local mayor to serve more than two terms. His tenure lasted 20 years and he retired from political life Dec. 31, 1967, choosing not to run for a sixth term.

After political life, Tucker opened the Ralph Tucker Agency, a public relations firm, then became involved with Chamber of Commerce activities as executive vice president, a position he had when he died.

Tucker's political ambition led him to the 1958 Indiana Democratic gubernatorial nomination. The battle to become the party's candidate for governor was a bitter one. He defeated then State Senator Matthew E. Welsh of Vincennes on the ninth ballot. Welsh later became governor. Tucker was defeated by Republican Harold Handley in the general election.

Although several persons from Terre Haute attempted to gain a party nomination for governor, Tucker was the only city resident ever to accomplish the task.

He was a delegate to numerous Democratic state conventions, attending his first one in 1936, and was a delegate to several national conventions, participating in his first one at that level in 1944.

While mayor, Tucker was active in the Indiana Municipal League and served as president of the organization.

Tucker's political life began in 1938 when he was elected city clerk. He served in that office until 1942, then became general manager of the National Literary Guild until his campaign for mayor.

Born Sept. 30, 1908, at Hymera, he was the son of Jacob and Rosa Ann Tucker. He spent his early years in Terre Haute at the Rose Orphans' Home and was graduated from Wiley High School in 1926.

After high school he went to Chicago to work for Brunswick Balke. Later he became a salesman for Armour and Co. In 1934 he returned to Terre Haute to do a local radio program.

Tucker was a member of Masonic Lodge, Kerman Grotto, Scottish Rite Valley of Terre Haute, Elks Lodge No. 86, Sycamore Club and Strawberry Hill Cannoneers. He also was named a Sagamore of the Wabash, one of the state's highest honorary awards.

Numerous industries came to Terre Haute during Tucker's five terms as mayor. Among them were Columbia Records, Bemis Co. Inc., Ethyl Visqueen, Anaconda Aluminum Modern Album, Pillsbury, Wheaton Glass and others.



RALPH TUCKER

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CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNOR — Former Terre Haute Mayor Ralph Tucker, who died Saturday, was the democratic candidate for Indiana governor in 1956, but lost the election

to Harold Hanley. He's shown here during a campaign session at Krietenstein American Legion Post.



EARLY CAMPAIGN DAYS — Ralph Tucker, a five-term mayor of Terre Haute, died Saturday after a long illness. Tucker, shown here in an early campaign photograph, was first elected in 1947. His political career ended in 1967.



WITH POLICE CHIEF — Former Terre Haute Mayor Ralph Tucker, right, and his police chief Frank Riddle were involved in a 1958 federal grand jury investigation into alleged gambling operations in Terre Haute. This photo was taken by an Associated Press photographer at Indianapolis during the gambling probe.

Tucker, Ralph Mayor

Community Affairs File

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THE TRIBUNE, TERRE HAUTE, IND

MONDAY, NOV. 14, 1977 3

Citizens pay tribute to Ralph Tucker

NOV 14 1977

Vigo County and Terre Haute community leaders when asked for their reaction raised their cups and toasted to former Terre Haute Mayor Ralph Tucker, who succumbed to a long illness Saturday at age 71.

Most could not find enough words to describe what affect they felt Tucker had on the community, but their attempts

follow.

Former Vigo County Commissioner Kermit Nees, a longtime friend and political associate, will remember Tucker as "a great humanitarian."

"I don't think we'll ever have a politician so interested in the welfare of the entire community and one who has done so much," Nees commented.

Raymond P. Harris, who served as city engineer for six years, said that "Ralph Tucker was a good guy to work with." The administration's major accomplishments during this period, Harris recalled, were the primary sewage treatment plant and the three swimming pools in city parks.

"Mayor Tucker was an excellent executive. It was a pleasure to work with him," Ernest J. Zwerner commented. Zwerner served as city attorney for about four years during the Tucker administration.

Forrest Sherer, prominent business and civic leader, said about Tucker the man, "He was a remarkable man in many ways. He had more fight in him than anyone I've ever known."

About Tucker the mayor, "I thought he was a good mayor, even though in five terms you can gain many political enemies. Regardless of politics, he made a real fine mayor."

And about Tucker the Chamber of Commerce leader, Sherer said, "I was real happy when he was made executive vice president of the Chamber. He would have made one of the greatest, if he could have maintained his health. Still, he made a creditable showing."

Terre Haute Mayor William J. Brighton reported city government flags are to be flown at half-staff in memorial to Tucker. City Hall will be closed Tuesday "in recognition of the passing of the city's good friend," the mayor said.

Brighton said, "His love and enthusiasm for public service and his zeal for the promotion of the city brought recognition to the community from throughout the nation."

He added that Tucker's efforts brought recognition of the city from other countries, also, with his efforts bringing about "international ties between Terre Haute and Tajimi, Japan, our sister city."

"Mayor Tucker brought an eloquence in style to Terre Haute causing him to be respected, admired and loved by those who knew him as a leader, politician and a friend," Brighton concluded.

"I have known and worked with Ralph Tucker for numerous years at the Chamber of Commerce and he was continuously helping the community to better the City of Terre Haute and towns surrounding Terre Haute," Vernie Potter, Terre Haute businessman and past president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce.

"Ralph was a pillar that many people leaned on for his advice and leadership to make Terre Haute a great place to work and live," he continued.

"It is a great loss to the many people of the community," Potter concluded. "Ralph has given so much to the community that his mark will certainly shine on for many years."

Marsee A. Cox, editor of the Terre Haute Tribune and Sunday Tribune-Star, said, "Like the community generally, I certainly will miss Ralph. But I have many fond memories to cherish."

"History will record him as one of the best mayors the city has ever had. Naturally a man who served as mayor 20 years would pick up an enemy here and there, but Ralph had few, if any, lasting political enemies. Critics? yes. But, who doesn't? He was a fighter to his last breath, losing his last battle against tremendous odds."

Vigo Superior Court Judge Harold J. Bitzegaio, one of Tucker's closest friends (among their shared interests was a love of gourmet cooking), said: "Terre Haute has lost its leading citizen. Ralph Tucker will long be remembered as such. The community is better for his presence. His record as a mayor and as a citizen are unsurpassed."

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Community Affairs File

Ralph Tucker Dies; Was Longtime Mayor

Terre Haute, Ind. — Services for Ralph Tucker, 69, executive vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce and former colorful, controversial Terre Haute mayor, will be held at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday in Bedino Peace Chapel, with burial in Highland Lawn Cemetery.

Mr. Tucker died Saturday night in Union Hospital after a lengthy illness.

A Democrat, Mr. Tucker was the mayor of Terre Haute for an unprecedented five terms — from 1947 to 1967.

During a stormy political career in which he sought election as Indiana governor and secretary of state, Mr. Tucker weathered many attacks on his administration of the Vigo County industrial city of 70,000 persons.

MR. TUCKER was elected to his fourth term in 1959, a year after he testified before a Federal grand jury in Indianapolis which was hearing evidence about an international horse book gambling operation, smashed here by Federal agents.

His administration was the subject of many attacks in national magazines, which Mr. Tucker always was quick to call smears on the good name of his city.

But Mr. Tucker was more familiar here and throughout Indiana for his ready, broad, sincere smile, which won him numerous friends.

HE WON AN upset nomination for governor of Indiana in 1956, defeating Matthew E. Welsh, who later became governor, on the ninth ballot at the state Democratic convention.

He defeated all the top names in the party, although he was nobody's choice for the nomination when the convention started — except the delegates.

The state party organization favored S. Hugh Dillin, now a federal judge, and former powers of the party were backing Welsh and Roger D. Branigin, a Lafayette attorney who also later became governor.

MR. TUCKER LOST in a Republican sweep, but he ran 100,000 votes ahead of Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate for President, in Indiana.

Mr. Tucker was born at Hymera in Sullivan County on Sept. 30, 1908. He was one of nine children. His father, Jacob, a coal miner, died when Mr. Tucker was 2.

His mother brought the children here, where Mr. Tucker lived in an orphanage during part of his childhood.

He was graduated from Wiley High School here in 1926 and found jobs washing and selling newspapers.



IN 1929, HE joined Radio Station WBOW here and soon became familiar on Wabash Avenue, in the city's main business district, conducting a "man-on-the-street" radio program.

Mr. Tucker's flair for oratory and ability to speak forcefully without notes helped him win his first political office here. He was elected city clerk in 1938 and served until Jan. 1, 1943.

He also had been an officer of the National Literary Association, a nationwide magazine subscription firm with headquarters here.

Mr. Tucker had become familiar about the city, making speeches before various groups and showing up in his white hat at all major fires, and at major police operations, often directing some of the action while he was mayor.

HIS OFFICE in city hall always was open. Mr. Tucker listened sympathetically to the pettiest problems of his constituents.

Often, he was called on to help settle labor disputes, of which there were many here. He took credit for helping settle one of the city's bitterest strikes, the United Auto Workers Union strike against the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company in 1952.

Mr. Tucker appeared at the company's gates after a riot involving members of a rival union, appealing for order as angry crowds surged around him. He later was one of the principal mediators in settling the strike.

ON SEVERAL occasions, Mr. Tucker halted police efforts to break up angry demonstrations by various youth groups at the main downtown intersection.

He climbed atop a box and pleaded with the crowd to disperse and to appoint a committee to meet him in his office the next morning to settle their grievances.

In all these appearances and at other public functions, Mr. Tucker was noted for his impeccable attire, which had earned him the nickname of "Jimmy Walker of the Middle West" — after the famed New York mayor of an earlier era.

A BELIEVER in the spoils system, he emphatically proclaimed it in a speech in Indianapolis during his unsuccessful race for governor by saying:

"I was raised on organization politics. I am a spoils system officeholder. I practice the spoils system. If there is any job a Democrat can't hold, I favor abolishing it."

In 1952, Mr. Tucker was elected president of the Indiana Municipal League, a post in which he had urged the Indiana General Assembly to give cities more home rule and a larger share of the motor fuel taxes and other taxes.

DURING HIS tenure as mayor, civil city tax rates were reduced, and numerous industries established plants here. Sanitation services were expanded, swimming facilities were offered in city parks for the first time in 40 years, and traffic problems were alleviated.

Mr. Tucker had operated an advertising agency after he left city hall.

His world travels took him to Japan, Panama and Mexico. He was known widely for his gourmet cooking.

Mr. Tucker was a Sagamore of the Wabash and was a member of the Masonic, Elks and Moose lodges.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Virginia Waade Tucker; and two daughters, Mrs. Sheila Kaperak and Mrs. Marcia Ray, both of Terre Haute.

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Tucker, Ralph

Ralph Tucker succumbs following lengthy illness

TS NOV 13 1977

Ralph Tucker, former five-term mayor of Terre Haute and executive vice president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce in recent years, died Saturday evening at Union Hospital after a lengthy illness. He was 69.

Tucker was the only mayor in Terre Haute history to be elected more than two terms, and when he was re-elected for the first time in 1951, he was only the second mayor in the city's history to serve two terms and the first to succeed himself since 1838.

Survivors include his wife, Virginia; two daughters, Mrs. Sheila Kaperak and Mrs. Marcia Ray; two grandsons, Todd and Terry Ray; a sister, Mrs. Margaret Gageby, and several nieces and nephews.

Friends may call from 4 to 9 p.m. Monday at the Bedino Peace Chapel where services will be conducted 2:30 p.m. Tuesday. Burial will be in Highland Lawn Cemetery.

In 1956, Tucker was nominated by the Democratic party for governor.

The late President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a Republican, was running against the late Adlai Stevenson for the second time that year and won big.

In Indiana, Tucker ran 100,000 votes ahead of Stevenson but still lost the election.

One of the most colorful mayors in Hoosier history, Tucker was the city's 32nd mayor. He was elected in 1947 the first time and was reelected in 1951, 1955, 1959, and 1963.

He decided not to run for re-election in 1967 and closed his mayoral career on Dec. 31, 1967.

Born on Sept. 30, 1908 in Hymera, he was the son of Jacob and Rosa Ann Tucker. He spent his early years in Terre Haute at the Rose Orphans' Home and was graduated from Wiley High School in 1926.

Following high school, he went to Chicago to work for Brunswick Balke. Later he became a salesman for Armour and Co. In 1934, he returned to Terre Haute to become the original "Man on the Street" as an announcer for radio station WBOW.

Tucker served as city clerk from 1938 to 1943.

He served as general manager of the National Literary Association when he left the city clerk's office and served in that post until he was elected mayor four years later.

He served as delegate to numerous Democratic state conventions, attending his first one in 1936 and was a delegate to several national Democratic conventions, his first one in 1944.

While mayor of Terre Haute, he was active in the Indiana Municipal League

and served as president of the organization.

After leaving the office of mayor, he started a public relations firm, the Ralph Tucker Agency. He operated it until he was named executive vice president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce.

To the end, Tucker expressed pride in accomplishments of the city during his years as mayor, pointing out that Columbia Records, Bemis Co. Inc., Ethyl Visqueen, Anaconda Aluminium, Modern Album, Pillsbury, Wheaton-Glass and other plants located in the city during that time.

He was a member of the Elks, Masons, the Grotto, and was a Sagamore of the Wabash.

His world travels took him to Japan, Panama, and Mexico. He was widely respected for his gourmet cooking.

He was married in 1936 to the former Virginia Waade in Chicago. The Tucker home is at 341 Barton Ave. Although suffering severe illness for some time, he remained active until Saturday's final, fatal attack. He was admitted to the northside hospital at 10 a.m. and died at 8 p.m.

→ 1906 according to Highland Lawn Cem.

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Community Affairs File

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Tucker, Ralph



DAY OF MOURNING — A day of mourning was declared in the City of Terre Haute Tuesday as the city's only five-term mayor was buried. Former Mayor Ralph Tucker, who died Saturday, was executive director of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce at the time of his death. In observance of his death, Mayor William J. Brighton ordered city flags flown at half-staff and municipal offices closed. The funeral was conducted Tuesday afternoon by the Rev. John Chironna Jr. Burial was in Highland Lawn Cemetery, with Judge Harold J. Bitzegalo, Bob Bennett, Andre Ponsot, Paul Mascari, Sam Duggan and Norman Fesler as pall bearers.

House of Photography

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Community Affairs File

T NOV 14 1977

Tucker services Tuesday

Funeral services for Ralph Tucker, former five-term mayor of Terre Haute and executive vice president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce, will be at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday at Bedino Peace Chapel with the Rev. John Chironna officiating. Burial will be in Highland Lawn Cemetery.

Friends may call at the funeral home from 4 to 9 p.m. Monday where memo-

Remembering Ralph Tucker, page 4; Citizens pay tribute, a look at Tucker's career, page 3.

rial services are to be conducted at 7:30 p.m. by Elks Lodge No. 86.

Tucker, 71, was admitted to Union Hospital at 10 a.m. Saturday and died at 7:55 p.m. He resided with his wife, Virginia, at 341 Barton Ave. Other survivors include two daughters, Mrs. Sheila Kaperak and Mrs. Marcia Ray; two grandsons, Todd and Terry Ray; a sister, Mrs. Margaret Gageby, and several nieces and nephews.

Tucker was the only mayor in Terre Haute history to be elected more than two terms, and when he was re-elected for the first time in 1951, he was only the second mayor in the city's history to serve two terms and the first to succeed himself since 1838.

One of the most colorful mayors in Hoosier history, Tucker was the city's 32nd mayor. He was elected in 1947 the first time and was re-elected in 1951, 1955, 1959 and 1963.

He decided not to run for re-election in 1967 and closed his mayoral career on Dec. 31, 1967.

In 1956, Tucker was nominated by the Democratic party for governor.

Tucker's political life began in 1938 when he was elected city clerk. He



RALPH TUCKER

served in that office until 1942, then became general manager of the National Literary Guild until his campaign for mayor.

Born on Sept. 30, 1906 in Hymera, was he the son of Jacob and Rosa Ann Tucker. He spent his early years in Terre Haute at the Rose Orphans' Home and was graduated from Wiley High School in 1926.

Following high school, he went to Chicago to work for Brunswick Balke.

Later he became a salesman for Armour and Co. In 1934, he returned to Terre Haute to become the original "Man on the Street" as a radio announcer.

After leaving office as mayor, he started a public relations firm, the Ralph Tucker Agency. He operated it until he was named executive vice president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce, a position he held at the time of his death.

Tucker, Ralph

Ralph Tucker dies at 71

Death June 11-14-77
TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (UPI) — Ralph Tucker, the man who ruled Terre Haute for two decades with a tight-fisted political machine that was often criticized as being corrupt, died in Union Hospital Saturday night.

He was 71 years old and was suffered from cancer.

Services were scheduled Tuesday and burial will be in Highland Lawn Cemetery at Terre Haute.

Survivors include the widow Virginia, two daughters and two grandchildren.

Tucker, orphaned as a young boy when his father was killed in a mining accident, also was the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for governor in 1956 against Harold Handley.

He was elected mayor of the western Indiana city in 1947 and ruled a tight political machine that was accused often of corruption. However, several federal probes failed to uncover any conclusive wrong-doing.

Terre Haute, under the Tucker administration, was the subject of a national magazine article that tabbed the community as "Sin City," declaring it has a haven of gambling and prostitution.

Despite notoriety, Tucker kept Terre Haute thriving.

A native of Hymera in Sullivan County, Tucker was prominent in Terre Haute civic affairs. At the time of his death, he was vice president of the Chamber of Commerce — a position he held since leaving the mayor's office.

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Tucker, Ralph

Biography
**Services
Today For
Ex-Mayor**
S. NOV 15 1977

Funeral services for Ralph Tucker, 71, 341 Barton Ave., former five-term mayor of Terre Haute, who died Saturday evening in Union Hospital, will be at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday at Bedino Peace Chapel.

The Rev. John Chironna Jr. will officiate, and burial will follow in Highland Lawn Cemetery.

At the time of his death Tucker was executive vice president of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce.

In honor of Tucker, Terre Haute City Hall will be closed all day Tuesday.

Pall bearers will be Judge Harold J. Bitzegaio, Bob Bennett, Andre Ponsot, Paul Mascari, Sam Duggan and Norman Fesler.

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